

REMARKS


The above amendment is presented to eliminate multiple dependent claims, thereby reducing PTO filing fees.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is entitled "**Version with Markings to Show Changes Made**".

Favorable action on the merits is now requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 15, 17, 18, 21, 22 and 24 have been amended as follows:

15. **(Amended)** The hollow fiber membrane product of the process of claim 1[, 2 or 4].

17. **(Amended)** The process of [any one of claims 1-14] claim 1 further comprising, after the rinsing step (d) and before-the drying step (e), the step:

(g) subjecting the rinsed hydrophilic microporous hollow fiber membrane to hot water treatment in a hot water bath at a temperature of 50° C to 100° C while relaxing tension on the fiber.

18. **(Amended)** A process for improving membrane performance of a microporous hydrophilic hollow fiber membrane comprising the step:

(h) subjecting the hydrophilic microporous hollow fiber membrane obtained by the process of [any one of claims 1-3 and 6-14] claim 1 to hot water treatment in a hot water bath at a temperature of 50° C to 100° C while relaxing tension on the fiber

21. **(Amended)** The process of [any one of claims 17-20] claim 17 wherein, in the heat treating step (g) or (h), tension on the fiber is decreased to as close to zero as possible by using two pulleys and allowing the fiber to sag between these pulleys.

22. **(Amended)** The process of [any one of claims 17-21] claim 17 wherein, in the heat treating step (g) or (h), the hot water treatment temperature is not less than 80°C.

24. (**Amended**) The hollow fiber membrane product of the process of [any one of claims 17-23] claim 17.

24. (**Amended**) The hollow fiber membrane product of the process of [any one of claims 17-23] claim 17.